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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2004

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UNITED STATES ARRAIGNS
EXTRADITED DOMINICAN COCAINE KINGPIN

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today the extradition and arraignment of QUIRINO ERNESTO PAULINO CASTILLO, a/k/a "El Don," ("PAULINO CASTILLO"), the head of a Dominican cocaine trafficking organization responsible for importing and attempting to import tons of cocaine into the United States since at least September 2003. PAULINO CASTILLO was formally extradited from the Dominican Republic on February 19, 2005, and was arraigned before a United States Magistrate Judge earlier today. PAULINO CASTILLO's extradition is the first under a newly adopted criminal code in the Dominican Republic and was the result of a 46 page extradition opinion written by the Dominican Supreme Court.

The extradition was the result of a joint investigation involving cooperation between the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") and the Dominican Government's National Directorate for Drug Control ("DNCD"). The investigation was sponsored by the

United States Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force
("OCDETF").

According to a five-count Indictment and the formal request for extradition (the "Extradition Package"), PAULINO CASTILLO headed a cocaine distribution organization that would receive South American (*i.e.*, Colombian and Venezuelan) cocaine in the Dominican Republic and then ship it to the United States. The organization used a variety of routes to send the cocaine from the Dominican Republic and/or Haiti to Puerto Rico and then onto the mainland United States, including New York. After the drugs were received and distributed in the United States, the drug proceeds were collected and repatriated back to the Dominican Republic by, among other means, wire transferring the proceeds to various bank accounts in the Dominican Republic for delivery to the owners of the drugs, including PAULINO CASTILLO. The investigation included a seizure of approximately 1387 kilograms (3050 pounds) of cocaine in the Dominican Republic on December 18, 2004.

According to the Extradition Package, the investigation evolved from Dominican-based wiretaps of telephones used by PAULINO CASTILLO and his associates.

According to the Extradition Package, PAULINO CASTILLO was arrested by the DNCD in the Dominican Republic on December 18, 2004, in conjunction with the seizure of the 1387 kilograms of cocaine.

If convicted, PAULINO CASTILLO faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. The Indictment also seeks forfeiture from PAULINO CASTILLO of \$7 million dollars.

Mr. KELLEY praised the cooperative investigative efforts of the DEA New York Task Force (comprised of DEA agents, New York City Police Department Detectives and New York State Police Investigators), DEA-Santo Domingo, and the DNCD.

Assistant United States Attorneys DAVID BERARDINELLI and JOHN O'DONNELL are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the indictment are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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